

Gongduk language

Gongduk or **Gongdu** (Tibetan: དགོང་འདུས་, Wylie: *Dgong-'dus*, it is also known as Gongdubikha^[3]) is an endangered Sino-Tibetan language spoken by about 1,000 people in a few inaccessible villages located near the Kuri Chhu river in the Gongdue Gewog of Mongar District in eastern Bhutan. The names of the villages are Bala, Dagsa, Damkhar, Pam, Pangthang, and Yangbari (*Ethnologue*).

Gongduk has complex verbal morphology, which Ethnologue considers a retention from Proto-Tibeto-Burman,^[1] and is lexically highly divergent.^[4] On this basis, it is apparently not part of any major subgroup and will probably have to be assigned to its own branch.^{[4][5]}

The people are said to have come from hunters that would move from place to place at times.^[6]

Currently, George van Driem is working towards the completion of a description of Gongduk based on his work with native speakers in the Gongduk area.^[5]

Gongduk	
Gongdukpa Ang དགོང་འདུས་	
Region	Bhutan
Native speakers	2,000 (2006) ^[1]
Language family	Sino-Tibetan <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">Gongduk</div>
Writing system	Tibetan script
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	goe
Glottolog	gong1251 (http://glottolog.org/resource/language/id/gong1251) ^[2]

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Classification

George van Driem (2001:870)^[7] proposes that the *Greater Bumthang* (East Bodish) languages, including Bumthang, Khengkha, and Kurtöp, may have a Gongduk substratum. Gongduk itself may also have a non-Tibeto-Burman substrate.

Gerber (2018)^[8] notes that Gongduk has had extensive contact with Black Mountain Mönpa before the arrival of East Bodish languages in Bhutan. Gongduk also has many Tshangla loanwords. The following comparative vocabulary table from Gerber (2018: 13-16) compares Gongduk, Black Mountain Mönpa, and Bjokapakha, which is a divergent Tshangla variety.

Gloss	Gongduk	Black Mountain Mönpa	Bjokapakha
hair (on head)	θɣm	guluŋ	tsham
tongue	dəli	'liː	lɪ
eye	mik	mek ~ mik	miŋ
ear	nəɾəŋ	naktəŋ	nabali
tooth	ɣn	'aː ~ waː	sha
bone	rukɣŋ	hɣtphok ~ yöphok	khaŋ-
blood	winiʔ	kɔk	yi
hand/arm	gur	lɣk ~ lok	gadaŋ
leg/foot	bidɣʔ	dɣkpɛŋ ~ tɛkɛŋ	bitiŋ
faeces	ki	cok	khɿ
water	dɣŋli	cö, khe	ri
rain	wɣ	ghö	ŋamtsu
dog	oki	cüla ~ khula	khu
pig	don	pɔk	phakpa
fish	kuŋwə	nye	ŋa
louse	dɣr	θæːk	shiŋ
bear	bekpələ	wɣm ~ wom	omsha
son	ledə	bæθaː	za
house	kiŋ	mhiː ~ mheː	phai
fire	mi	'aːmik ~ 'aːmit	mɿ
to hear	lə yu-	goː-	nai tha
to see	tɣŋ-	tuŋ-	thoŋ-
to look	məl- ~ mɣt-	mak-	gotto
to sit	mi- ~ mu-	buŋ- ~ bæŋ-	laŋ-
to die	komθ-	θɛː- ~ θɛʔ-	shi-
to kill	tɣt-	θüt- ~ θut- ~ θit-	she-
1sg pronoun	ðə	kö	jaŋ
2sg pronoun	gi	iŋ	nan
3sg pronoun	gon	hoʔma (mas.); hoʔmet (fem.)	dan
1pl pronoun	ðiŋ	ɔŋdat (incl.); anak (excl.)	ai
2pl pronoun	giŋ	iŋnak	nai
3pl pronoun	gonmə	hoʔoŋ	dai

Grammar

Morphology

Gongduk has productive suffixal morphology (van Driem 2014).^[9]

<-məʔtʰ> ‘plural suffix in human nouns’

Examples:

- oloʔŋməʔtʰ ‘children’ < oloʔk ‘child’ + -məʔtʰ
- ŋidɣməʔtʰ ‘people’ < ŋidɣ ‘person’ + -məʔtʰ
- aroʔŋməʔtʰ ‘friends’ < aroʔk ‘friend’ + -məʔtʰ

However, non-human plural nouns do not take on any suffixes, and remain the same:

- kurtə ‘horse, horses’
- kəitɣ ‘bird, birds’
- kiŋ ‘house, houses’

<-e ~ -ðe ~ -θe> ‘ergative and possessive suffix’

Examples:

- bɣʔlɣpə-e ‘the people of Bɣʔlɣ [ergative]’
- choŋnən-ðe me ‘the seed of the maize’
- nor-θe taŋ ‘meat of the cow [beef]’
- rek-θe rukɣŋ ‘head bone [skull]’
- aroʔk-te-θe ‘the friend [ergative]’
- əp drəkpə-e ‘Ap Drakpa [ergative]’
- θok-θe əkəm ‘egg of offering (sacrificial egg)’
- lei-ti-ðe juʔmə ‘after one month’

<-gi> ‘ablative suffix’

Examples:

- ðiŋ goŋduʔ-gi əna ‘We are from Gongduk’
- nikkələŋ-gi ‘by way of the stairs’
- dəkθə-gi ‘from Daksa’
- kidu-gi ‘as a kidu [government gift]’
- bɣʔlɣ-gi ‘from Bɣʔlɣ’
- denkəle wɣŋ-gi ‘from Dengkalé Dale’
- doʔmoŋ-gi ‘from "Black Roof" village’
- phəjoŋ pəm-gi ‘from Phajong Pam’

<-gu ~ -go ~ -ku ~ -ko> ‘dative / locative suffix’

Examples:

- gərəŋ-go 'to whom'
- ohaŋ duʔ-gu 'in that village'
- rek-ko 'to [his] head'
- ǝə-go 'to me'
- jə-go 'to India'
- gaŋ-go 'whereto, where precisely'
- pəkək-ko 'at times, sometimes'
- thimphu-gu 'to Thimphu'

Demonstratives

Gongduk demonstratives precede head nouns.^[9]

ohaŋ 'that (demonstrative)'

Examples:

- ohaŋ ŋidɣ 'that person'
- ohaŋ koŋ 'that tree'
- ohaŋ duʔgu 'in that village'

Personal pronouns

Gongduk has the following personal pronoun paradigm.^[9]

	singular (absolute)	singular (ergative & genitive)	plural (absolute)	plural (ergative & genitive)	dual (absolute)	dual (ergative & genitive)
first person	ǝə	ǝe	ǝiŋ	ǝiŋ, ǝiŋ ŋəŋpoe		
second person	gi	gi	giŋ	giŋ, giŋ ŋəŋpoe		
third person	gon	gonǝe	gonmə	gonməe, gonma ŋəŋpoe		
inclusive					iθi, iθirəŋ gəŋpo	dei, dei gəŋpoe

van Driem (2014) compares the Gongduk first person singular personal pronoun ǝə 'I, me' to Kathmandu Newar *dʒiː* ~ *dʒĩ*- 'I, me' and Tshangla *dʒaŋ* ~ *dʒi*- ~ *dʒiŋ*- 'I, me'. He also compares the Gongduk first person plural personal pronoun ǝiŋ 'we, us' to Kathmandu Newar *dʒ^hai* ~ *dʒ^hĩ*- 'we, us'.

Vocabulary

The Gongduk words and phrases below are from van Driem (2014).^[9]

Basic vocabulary

- rek 'head'
- rukʰŋ 'bone'
- əŋ 'language, mouth'
- dʰŋli 'water'
- wʰ 'rain'
- yər 'cliff'
- dʰ 'salt'
- ʎn 'tooth'
- koŋ 'tree'
- diŋ 'wood'
- me 'seed'
- dola 'cooked Setaria or rice'
- choŋnən 'maize'
- ʎwʰ 'banana'
- taŋ 'meat'
- wərə 'highland paddy, ghaiyā'
- khərəŋ 'cooked Panicum or maize'
- don 'pig'
- nor 'cow'
- kurtə 'horse'
- kəitʰ 'bird'
- əkəm 'egg'
- jə 'day (24-hour period)'
- lei 'month'
- oloʔk 'child'
- ŋidʰ 'person'
- aroʔk 'friend'
- duʔ 'village'
- kiŋ 'house'
- nikkələŋ 'stairs'
- θok 'offering'
- goŋduʔ 'Gongduk'

Numerals

- ti '1'
- niktsə '2'
- towə '3'
- diyə, piyə '4'
- ŋəwə '5'
- qukpə '6'
- ðukpə '7'
- yitpə, hetpə '8'
- guwə '9'
- deyə '10'
- deθəti '11'
- deθəniktsə '12'
- deθətowə '13'
- khəe 'score (20)'
- khəe ŋəwə 'five score, i.e. one hundred'

Interrogative pronouns

- gərəŋ 'who'
- gərəe 'whose'
- θəpo 'what'
- ko 'when'
- gaŋ 'where, whither'
- qəti 'how much, how many'
- gainəŋ 'which, whence'
- qətiŋ 'at what time'
- θəu, θəudi 'why, how come'
- gora, gorapəm 'how, in which way'
- ohaŋ 'that (demonstrative)'

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External links

- ELAR archive of *Documentation of the flora and fauna of Gongduk* (<http://elar.soas.ac.uk/deposit/0353>)

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